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## HEGEL ON SYMBOLIC ART.

Translated from the Second French Edition of Charles Renard's Translation of the Second Part of Hegel's *Æsthetics*, by WM. M. BRYANT.

### I. INTRODUCTION.

#### *Development of the Ideal in the Special Forms of Art.*

In the first part of this work we have had under consideration the realization of the idea of the beautiful as constituting the Ideal in art. But however numerous may be the different phases under which the conception of the ideal is presented to our view, all these determinations are only related to the work of art considered in a general way.

Now the idea of the beautiful as the *absolute idea*, contains a totality of distinct elements or of *essential moments*, which, as such, must manifest themselves outwardly and become realized. Thus are produced what we may call, in general, the *Special Forms of Art*.

These must be considered as the development of those ideas which the conception of the ideal contains within it and which art brings to light. Thus its development is not accomplished

by virtue of an external activity, but by the specific force inherent in the idea itself; so that the *Idea*, which develops itself in a totality of particular forms, is what the world of art presents us.

In the second place, if the forms of art find their principle in the idea which they manifest, this, on the contrary, is truly the idea only when it is realized in its appropriate forms. Thus, to each particular stage which art traverses in its development, there is immediately joined a real form. It is, then, indifferent whether we consider the progress as shown in the development of the idea or in that of the forms which realize it, since these two terms are closely united the one to the other, and since the perfecting of the idea as *matter* appears no less clearly than does the perfecting of the *form*.

Hence, imperfection of the artistic form betrays itself also as imperfection of idea. If then at the origin of art we encounter forms which, compared with the true ideal, are inadequate to it, this is not to be understood in the sense in which we are accustomed to say of works of art that they are defective, because they express nothing or are incapable of attaining to the idea which they ought to express. The idea of each epoch always finds its appropriate and adequate form; and these are what we designate as the special forms of art. The imperfection or the perfection can consist only in the degree of relative truth which appertains to the idea itself; for the matter must first be true and developed in itself before it can find a perfectly appropriate form.

We have, in this respect, *three principal forms* to consider.

1. The first is the *Symbolic Form*. Here the idea seeks its true expression in art, without finding it; because, being still abstract and indeterminate, it cannot create an external manifestation which conforms to its real essence. It finds itself, in presence of phenomena of nature and of the events of human life, as if confronted by a foreign world. Thus it exhausts itself in useless efforts to produce a complete expression of conceptions vague and ill-defined; it perverts and falsifies the forms of the real world which it seizes in arbitrary relations. Instead of combining and identifying, of blending totally the form and the idea, it arrives only at a superficial and abstract agreement between them. These two terms, thus brought into connection, manifest their disproportion and heterogeneity.

2. But the idea, in virtue of its very nature, cannot remain thus in abstraction and indetermination. As the principle of free activi-

ty, it seizes itself in its reality as spirit. The spirit then, as free subject, is determined by and for itself, and in thus determining itself it finds in its own essence its appropriate outward form. This unity, this perfect harmony between the idea and its external manifestation, constitutes the second form of art—the *Classic Form*.

Here art has attained its perfection, in so far as there is reached a perfect harmony between the idea as spiritual in individuality, and the form, as sensuous and corporeal reality. All hostility between the two elements has disappeared, in order to give place to a perfect harmony.

3. Nevertheless, spirit cannot rest with this form which is not its complete realization. To reach this perfect realization spirit must pass beyond the classic form; must arrive at a pure spirituality which, returning upon itself, descends into the depths of its own inmost nature. In the classic form, indeed, notwithstanding its generality, spirit reveals itself with a special determinate character; it does not escape from the finite. Its external form, as a form altogether visible, is limited. The matter, the idea itself, because there is perfect fusion, must present the same character. Only the finite spirit is able to unite itself with external manifestation so as to form an indissoluble unity.

When the idea of beauty seizes itself as absolute or infinite Spirit, it also at the same time discovers itself to be no longer completely realized in the forms of the external world; it is only in the internal world of consciousness that it finds, as spirit, its true unity. It breaks up, then, this unity which forms the basis of *Classic Art*; it abandons the external world in order to take refuge within itself. This is what furnishes the type of the *Romantic Form*. Sensuous representation, with its images borrowed from the external world, no longer sufficing to express free spirituality, the form becomes foreign and indifferent to the idea. So that *Romantic Art* thus reproduces the separation of matter and form, but from the side opposite to that from which this separation takes place in *Symbolic Art*.

As a summary of the foregoing we may say that *Symbolic Art seeks* this perfect unity of the idea with the external form; *Classic Art finds* it, for the senses and the imagination, in the representation of spiritual individuality; *Romantic Art transcends* it in its infinite spirituality, which rises above the visible world.

## PART I.

## OF THE SYMBOLIC FORM OF ART.

I. *Of the Symbol in General.*

The symbol, in the sense which we here give to this term, constitutes, according to its very idea, as well as from the epoch of its appearance in history, the *beginning of art*. Thus it ought rather to be considered as the precursor of art. It belongs especially to the *Orient*, and will conduct us by a multitude of transitions, transformations and mediations to the true realization of the ideal under the classic form. We must then distinguish the symbol, properly speaking, as furnishing the type of all the conceptions or representations of art at this epoch, from that species of symbol which, on its own account, is nothing more than a mere unsubstantial, outward form. Where the symbol presents itself under its appropriate and independent form it exhibits in general the character of *sublimity*. The idea, being vague and indeterminate, incapable of a free and measured development, cannot find in the real world any fixed form which perfectly corresponds to it; in default of which correspondence and proportion it transcends infinitely its external manifestation. Such is the sublime style, which is rather the immeasurable than the true sublime.

We will first explain what should here be understood by the term symbol.

I. The symbol is a sensuous object which must not be taken in itself such as it presents itself immediately to us, but in a more extended and more general sense. There are then in the symbol two terms to be distinguished: First, the *meaning*, and, secondly, the *expression*. The first is a conception of the mind; the second, a sensuous phenomenon, an image which addresses itself to the senses.

Thus the symbol is a *sign*, but it is distinguished from the signs of language in this, that between the image and the idea which it represents, there is a relation which is natural, not arbitrary or conventional. It is thus that the lion is the symbol of courage, the circle, of eternity, the triangle of the trinity.

Still the symbol does not represent the idea perfectly, but only from a single side. The lion is not merely courageous, the fox cunning. Whence it follows that the symbol, having many

meanings, is equivocal. This ambiguity ceases only when the two terms are first conceived separately and then in combination the symbol then gives place to comparison.

Thus conceived, the symbol, with its enigmatical and mysterious character, is peculiarly applicable to a whole epoch of history, to *Oriental art* and its extraordinary creations. It characterizes that order of monuments and emblems by which the peoples of the Orient have sought to express their ideas, but have been able to do so only in an equivocal and obscure fashion. Instead of beauty and regularity these works of art present a bizarre, grandiose, fantastic aspect.

When we find ourselves in this world of symbolic representations and images of ancient Persia, India and Egypt, all seems strange to us. We feel that we are groping about in the midst of problems. These images do not entertain us of themselves. The spectacle neither pleases nor satisfies us in itself; we must pass beyond the sensuous form in order to penetrate its more extended and more profound meaning. In other productions we see at the first glance that they have nothing serious; that, like the stories of children, they are a simple play of the imagination, which is pleased with accidental and particular associations. But these peoples, although in their infancy, demand a meaning and a truer and more substantial basis of ideas. This, indeed, is what we find among the Indians, the Egyptians, etc.: although in these enigmatical figures the meaning may often be very difficult to divine. What part must it play amid this poverty and grossness of conceptions? How far, on the contrary, in the incapability of expressing by purer and more beautiful forms the depth of religious ideas, is it proper to call in the fantastic and the grotesque to the aid of a representation of which the aspiration is not to remain beneath its object? This is a difficult point to decide.

The classic ideal, it is true, presents the same difficulty. Though the idea seized by the mind may here be lodged in an adequate form, the image, beyond this idea of which it serves as the expression, represents other and foreign ideas. Is it possible to see in these representations and these stories only absurd inventions which shock the religious sense—as the amours of Jupiter, &c.? Such stories being related of superior divinities, is it not very probable that they contain a wider and deeper meaning concealed? Whence two different opinions, the one of which regards mythology as a collection of fables unworthy the idea of

God; which present, it is true, much that is interesting and charming, but which cannot furnish a basis for a more serious interpretation. In the other, on the contrary, they pretend that a more general and more profound meaning resides in these fables. To penetrate beneath the veil with which they envelop their mysterious meanings is the task of those who devote themselves to the philosophic study of myths.

All mythology is then conceived as essentially symbolical. This would be to say that myths, as creations of the human spirit, however bizarre and grotesque they may appear, contain in themselves a meaning for the reason; general thoughts upon the divine nature; in a word, philosophemes.

From this point of view myths and traditions have their origin in the spirit of man, who can easily make a play of the representations of his gods, but seeks and finds in them also a higher interest, whenever he finds himself unable to set forth his ideas in a more suitable manner. Now this is the true opinion. Thus when reason finds again these forms in history, it realizes the necessity of probing their meaning.

If, then, we penetrate to the source of these myths in order to discover there their concealed truth, yet without losing from view the accidental element which belongs to the imagination and to history, we are able thus to justify the different mythologies. And, to justify man in the images and the representations which his spirit has created is a noble enterprise, far preferable to that which consists in collecting historical particulars more or less insignificant.

Without doubt, priests and poets have never known under an abstract and general form the thoughts which constitute the basis of mythological representations, and it is not by design that they have been enveloped in a symbolical veil. But it does not follow that their representations cannot be symbols and ought not to be considered as such. Those peoples, at the time when they composed their myths, lived in a state altogether poetic; they expressed their most secret and most profound sentiments, not by abstract formulæ, but by the forms of the imagination.

Thus the mythological fables contain a wholly rational basis and more or less profound religious ideas.

Nor is it less correct to say that for every true work of art there serves as basis a universal thought which, afterward presented under an abstract form, must give the meaning of the

work. The critical spirit, or the understanding, hastens on to the symbol or the allegory. Here it separates image from signification and thus destroys the art-form; to which, indeed, in respect of the symbolic explanation which only brings out the universal as such, no importance attaches.

II. But this mode of extending the symbol to the entire domain of mythology, is by no means the method which we are here to pursue. Our aim is not to discover to what point the representations of art have had a symbolic or allegorical meaning.

On the contrary we have to inquire how far the symbol, properly speaking, extends as a *special form of art*, while still preserving its appropriate character; and thereby we shall distinguish it in particular from the two other forms, Classic and Romantic.

Now the *symbol*, in the special sense which we attach to this term, ceases where *free subjectivity* (personality) taking the place of vague and indeterminate conceptions, constitutes the basis of representation in art. Such is the character which the *Greek gods* present us. Greek art represents them as free individuals, independent in themselves; genuine moral persons. Hence we cannot consider them from the symbolic point of view. The acts, for example, of Jupiter, of Apollo, of Minerva, belong only to these divinities themselves; represent only their power and their passions. Should we abstract from these free individualities a general idea and set it up as an explanation, we should abandon and destroy in these figures just that which corresponds to the idea of art. Whence artists have never been satisfied with these symbolic or allegorical explanations applied to works of art and to mythology. If there remains a place for allegory or the symbol, it is in the accessories, in simple attributes, signs; as the eagle by the side of Jupiter, the ox by the side of St. Luke; while the Egyptians saw in the bull Apis a divinity itself.

The difficult point in our investigation is to distinguish whether what are represented as personages in mythology or art possess a real *individuality* or *personality*, or whether they contain but the empty semblance of it, and are only mere *personifications*. This is what constitutes the real problem of the limitation of Symbolic Art.

What interests us here is that we are present at the very origin of art. At the same time we shall observe the progressive advancement of the symbol, the stages by which it proceeds toward genuine art. Whatever may be the narrow line which unites re-



ligion and art, we have here to consider the symbol solely from the artistic point of view. We abandon to the history of mythology itself the religious side.

DIVISION.—Many degrees are to be noted in the development of this form of art in the Orient.

I. But first we must mark its *origin*. This, which is blended with that of art in general, can be explained in the following manner :—

The sentiment of art, like the religious sentiment, like scientific curiosity, is born of *wonder*; the man who wonders at nothing lives in a state of imbecility and stupidity. This state ceases when his spirit, disengaging itself from matter and from physical necessities, is struck by the phenomena of nature, and seeks their meaning; when he is impressed by something in them grand and mysterious, a concealed power which reveals itself.

Then he experiences also the need of representing this internal sentiment of a general and universal power. Particular objects, the elements, the sea, the waves, the mountains, lose their immediate meaning, and become for the spirit images of this invisible power.

It is then that art appears. It is born of the necessity of representing this idea by sensuous images, which address themselves at once to the senses and to the mind.

In religions, the idea of an absolute power is at first manifested by the worship of physical objects. The divinity is identified with nature itself; but this gross worship cannot last. Instead of seeing the absolute in real objects, man conceives it as a distinct and universal being; he seizes, though very imperfectly, the relation which unites the invisible principle to the objects of nature; he fashions an image, a symbol destined to represent it. Art is then the interpreter of religious ideas.

Such, in its origin, is art, and with it the Symbolic Form is born.

We will attempt, by a precise division, to trace exactly the circle in which the symbol moves.

That which characterizes, in general, *Symbolic Art*, is that it vainly endeavors to find pure conceptions and a mode of representation which is suitable to them. It is a conflict between *matter* and *form*, both imperfect and heterogeneous. Whence the incessant strife between the two elements of art, which seek, uselessly, to place themselves in harmony. The degrees of its development present successive phases or modes of this conflict.

1. At the beginning of art this conflict does not yet exist. The point of departure, at least, is a still undivided *unity*, in the center of which ferments the discord between the two principles. Here, then, the creations of art, little distinguished from objects of nature, are still scarcely symbols.

2. The termination of this epoch is the *disappearance of the symbol*, which takes place by the reflective separation of the two terms, the idea being clearly conceived; the image, on its side, being perceived as distinct from the idea. From their reconciliation (*rapprochement*) is born the *reflective* symbol or *comparison*, the allegory, etc.

The two extreme points being thus fixed, we may now see in what follows, the intermediary points or degrees. The general division is this:

I. The true symbol is the *unconscious, irreflective* symbol, of which the basis is *comparison*, and which marks the close of this epoch.

II. Then follows, as a mixed form, or form of transition, the *reflective symbol*, of which the basis is *comparison*, and which marks the close of this epoch.

We have, then, to follow each of these two forms in the successive stages of its development; to mark its steps in the career which it has passed through in the Orient before arriving at the Greek ideal.

## CHAPTER FIRST.

### OF THE NAIVE SYMBOLICAL.

#### *I. Immediate Unity of Form and Idea.*

1. Religion of Zoroaster.—2. Its Character not Symbolic.—2. Absence of Art in its Conceptions and Representations.

At the first moment of the history of art, the divine principle, God, appears identified with nature and with man. In the worship of the *Lama*, for example, a real man is adored as God. In other religions the sun, mountains, rivers, the moon, and animals are equally the object of a religious worship.

The spectacle of this unity of God and nature is offered us in the most striking manner in the life and religion of the ancient *Persians*, in the *Zend-Avesta*.

1. In the religion of Zoroaster, the light is God himself. God is not separated from the light, viewed as simple expression, em-

blem, sensuous image of the Divinity. If light is taken in the sense of the good and just Being, of the preservative principle of the universe, which disseminates life and its benefits everywhere, it is not merely an image of the good principle: the sovereign good is the light itself. It is the same with the opposition between *light* and *darkness*: the latter being considered as the impure element in everything, the hideous, the evil, the principle of death and destruction.

2. The worship which the *Zend-Avesta* describes is still less symbolic. The practices of which it makes a religious duty, for the Parsee are serious occupations, which have for their object the extension of purity in the physical and the moral sense to all. We do not find here symbolic dances which imitate the course of the stars; religious acts which have value only as images and signs of general conceptions. Hence, properly speaking, no art exists there but only a sort of poesy. Compared with the grosser images, with the insignificant idols of other peoples, the worship of light, as pure and universal substance, may present something beautiful, elevated, grand, more conformed to the nature of the supreme good and of truth. But this conception remains vague; the imagination invents neither a profound idea nor a new form. If we see certain general types appear, together with forms which correspond to them, it is the result of an artificial combination, not a work of poetry and of art.

3. Thus this unity of the invisible principle with visible objects constitutes merely the first form of the symbol in art. To attain to the symbolic form, properly speaking, it is necessary that the distinction and separation of the two terms should appear to us clearly represented. This is what takes place in the religion, art and poetry of India, in the *symbolic of the imagination*.

## II. The Symbolic of the Imagination.

1. Characteristics of Indian Thought.—2. Naturalism and Absence of Measure in the Indian Imagination.—3. Its Mode of Personifying.—4. Purifications and Expiations.

A more advanced form and a superior degree of art present themselves to us where the separation of the two terms is wrought out. The intelligence forms abstract conceptions and seeks images which will express them. The imagination, properly speaking, is born. Art commences in reality. The true symbol, however, does not yet appear.

1. What we first encounter are the productions of an imagination which ferments and is stirred to its profoundest depths. In this first attempt of the human spirit to separate the elements and to again combine them, its thought is still confused and vague. The principle of things is not conceived in its spiritual nature; the ideas concerning God are empty abstractions; at the same time the forms which represent this general principle bear an exclusively sensuous and material type. Plunged still in the contemplation of the sensuous world, having for aid in estimating reality neither measure nor fixed rule, man exhausts himself in futile efforts to penetrate the universal significance of the world; where the opposition between matter and form breaks out he knows how to employ only images and gross representations to express the profoundest thoughts. The imagination proceeds thus from one extreme to the other, rising very high only to fall still lower; wandering, without support, without guide and without aim, in a world of representations at once grandiose, bizarre and grotesque.

Such is the character of *East Indian* mythology and of the art which corresponds to it.

In the midst of these over-hasty and inconsiderate leaps, in this passage from one excess to another, if we find grandeur and an imposing character in these conceptions, we see, next moment, the universal being precipitated into the most ignoble forms of the sensuous world. The imagination knows how to escape from this contradiction only by infinitely extending the dimensions of form. It wanders off into gigantic creations characterized by the absence of all measure, and is lost in the vague or the arbitrary.

Notwithstanding the fecundity, the brilliancy and the grandeur of their conceptions, the Indians have never possessed a clear sense of persons and events—the true historic sense. In this constant amalgamation of the absolute and the finite the complete absence of positive spirit and of reason cannot fail to be remarked. Thought permits itself to wander amid chimeras the most extravagant and the most monstrous which the imagination can possibly produce. Thus, 1st, The conception of Brahma is the abstract idea of being without life or reality, deprived of real form and of personality; 2d, From this idealism pushed to the extreme, the intelligence precipitates itself into the most unbridled naturalism; 3d, It deifies objects of nature, animals. Divinity

appears under the form of an idiot man, deified because he belongs to a certain caste. Each individual, because he is born in this caste, represents Brahma in person. The union of man with God is reduced to the level of a simple material fact. Whence, also, the role which the law of the generation of beings plays in this religion, which gives place to the most obscene representations. It would be easy to render apparent the contradictions which swarm in this religion, as well as the confusion which reigns throughout this mythology. A parallel between the Indian and the Christian trinities will show none the less the extreme difference. The three persons of the former are not persons; each of them is an abstraction with respect to the others. Whence it follows that if this trinity has some analogy with the Christian, it is inferior to it, and we should guard ourselves from thinking to recognize in it the Christian dogma.

The part which corresponds to Greek polytheism demonstrates equally its inferiority. Here we must remark the confusion of those numberless theogonies and cosmogonies which contradict and destroy one another, and wherein the idea of natural, not spiritual, generation, distinctly dominates. Obscenity is often pushed to the last extreme. In the Greek fables at least, and in the Theogony of Hesiod in particular, we often catch a glimpse of the moral sense. Everything is clearer and more explicit, more strongly united, and we do not remain shut up in the circle of the divinities of nature.

In denying to Indian art the idea of true beauty and of genuine sublimity, we must not forget that it offers us, chiefly in poetry, scenes from human life full of attraction and sweetness; many graceful images and tender sentiments; most brilliant descriptions of nature; charming traits of child-like simplicity and naive innocence in love; to which, at the same time, is occasionally added much that is grand and noble.

But as for that which concerns the fundamental conceptions in their totality, the spiritual cannot disengage itself from the sensuous. Side by side with the most elevated situations we come upon the most insipid triviality—a complete absence of precision and proportion. The sublime is only the measureless; and, respecting what holds good at the basis of the myth, imagination, seized by a dizziness and incapable of mastering the flight of thought, wanders into the fantastic, or only produces enigmas which have no meaning for the reason.

Thus the creations of the Indian imagination seem to realize as yet only imperfectly the idea of the symbolic form itself. It is in *Egypt*, in the monuments of *Egyptian art*, that we find the type of the genuine symbol.

### III. The Symbolic Properly So-Called.

1. Egyptian Religion; Ideas of the Egyptians Concerning the Dead; Pyramids.—2. Worship of the Dead; Masks of Animals.—3. Perfection of the Symbolic Form; Memnon, Isis and Osiris; the Sphinx.

At the first stage of art we are separated from the confusion and identity of *matter* and *form*, of spirit and nature. Later, form and matter are separated and opposed. The imagination has vainly sought to combine them, and has succeeded only in causing their disproportion to become more manifest. In order that thought may be free, it is necessary that it should liberate itself from the material form, that it should strip this off and destroy it. The moment or element of destruction, of *negation*, or annihilation, is then necessary in order that spirit may arrive at consciousness of itself and of its spirituality. This idea of death as a moment of the divine nature appears even in the Indian religion; but this is only a change, a transformation and an abstraction. The gods are annihilated and vanish the one into the other, and all in their turn into a single being, Brahma, the universal Being. In the Persian religion, the two principles, negative and positive, Ormuzd and Ahriman, exist independently and remain separate. Now this principle of *negation*—of *death* and *resurrection*, as moments and attributes of the divine nature—constitutes the basis of a new religion wherein this thought is expressed by the forms of its worship, and appears in all its conceptions and its monuments. It is the fundamental characteristic of the art and the religion of Egypt. The glorification of death and of suffering, as annihilation of the sensuous nature, appears already in the consciousness of peoples, in the worships of Asia Minor, of Phrygia, and of Phoenicia.

But if death is a necessary moment in the life of the absolute, it does not remain in this annihilation; this is but a means of passing to a superior existence, of arriving—after the destruction of the visible existence—by resurrection, to a divine immortality. Death is only the birth of a more elevated principle and the triumph of spirit.

Whence the physical form in art loses its value for itself, as

well as its independent existence. Further, the conflict between form and idea must cease. Form is subordinated to idea. That fermentation of the imagination which produces the fantastic is quieted and calmed. Preceding conceptions are replaced by a mode of representation, *enigmatical*, it is true, but superior, and which offers us the true character of the symbol.

The idea begins to assert itself. The symbol, on its part, takes a more precise form, in which the spiritual principle reveals itself more clearly and disengages itself from physical nature, though it is still unable to appear in all its clearness.

To this idea of the symbolic corresponds the following mode of representation: At first human forms and actions express something else than themselves; they reveal the divine principle by qualities which have a real analogy with it. The phenomena and laws of nature, representing in the various kingdoms the life, birth, growth, death and resurrection of beings, are employed by preference. Such are the germination and growth of plants, the phases of the course of the sun, the succession of the seasons, the phenomena of the rise and fall of the Nile, etc. Here, because of real resemblance and natural analogies, the fantastic is abandoned. We observe a more intelligent choice of symbolic forms. This is an imagination which already knows how to regulate and control itself, which shows greater calmness and reason.

Here, then, appears a higher conciliation of idea and form, and at the same time an extraordinary tendency toward art; an irresistible inclination which satisfies itself in a manner wholly symbolic indeed, but superior to preceding modes. This is the tendency proper towards art, and especially towards the figurative arts. Whence the necessity of finding and fashioning a form, an *emblem* which expresses the idea and may be subordinated to it; of creating a work which reveals to spirit a general conception; of presenting a spectacle which shows that these forms have been chosen designedly for the purpose of expressing profound ideas.

This emblematic or symbolic combination may be effected in many ways. *Number* is the most abstract expression. And the *symbolism of numbers* plays a very important role in Egyptian art. Sacred numbers recur incessantly in the stairways, the columns, etc. These are, then, symbolic figures traced in space, the windings of the labyrinth, sacred dances which represent the movements of the celestial bodies. On a higher plane is placed the human form, already fashioned with greater perfection than

in India. A general symbol sums up the chief idea: it is the *Phoenix*, which consumes itself and is born again from its own ashes.

In the myths which serve in transition, as those of Asia Minor; in the myth of Adonis mourned by Venus, in that of Castor and Pollux, and in the fable of Proserpine, this idea of death and resurrection is already very apparent.

But above all it is Egypt that has symbolized the idea. Egypt is the land of the symbol. The problems, nevertheless, remain unsolved. The enigmas of Egyptian art were enigmas for the Egyptians themselves. Although in the Orient, the Egyptians are a genuinely artistic people. They show an indefatigable activity directed toward satisfying this need of symbolic representation which torments them. But their monuments remain mysterious and silent; spirit has not yet found the form appropriate to it; it does not yet know how to speak the clear and intelligible language of the spirit. This is first of all an architectural people. It has channeled the soil, excavated lakes, and, in its instinct for art, it has raised to the light of day gigantic structures and executed beneath the ground works equally immense. Such was the occupation, the life of this people, which has covered the country with its monuments in greater number and more varied forms than can be found in any other region.

If we characterize in a more precise manner the monuments of Egyptian art and penetrate their meaning, we discover the following aspects:—

1. The chief idea—the *idea of death*—is conceived as a moment or element of the life of spirit; not as a principle of evil. This is the opposite of the Persian Dualism. It is, besides, no longer the absorption of beings into the Universal Being, as in the Indian religion. The invisible preserves its existence and its personality; it preserves even its physical form. Whence the embalmment and worship of the dead. Further, the imagination rises above this visible duration. It is with the Egyptians that for the first time in the world's history there appears the precise distinction between soul and body, together with the dogma of *immortality*. This idea is, nevertheless, still imperfect, for it accords equal importance to the duration of the body and to that of the soul.

Such is the conception which serves as the basis of Egyptian art and which is expressed under a multitude of symbolic forms.



It is in this idea that we must seek the meaning of works of Egyptian architecture: two worlds, the world of the living and that of the dead; two architectures, the one upon the surface of the ground, the other subterranean. The labyrinths, the tombs, and above all the pyramids, represent this idea.

The pyramid, image of symbolic art, is a species of envelope, hewn in the form of a crystal, which conceals a mystic object, an invisible being. Whence also the external, superstitious side of worship, an excess difficult to avoid, the adoration of the divine principle in *animals*, a gross worship which is no longer even symbolic.

2. *Hieroglyphics*, another form of Egyptian art, is itself in great part symbolic because it reveals ideas by images borrowed from nature and which have some analogy with those ideas.

3. But a defect becomes apparent especially in representations of the *human form*. Indeed, if in this form a mysterious and spiritual force reveals itself, this force is not true personality. The inner principle is wanting; action and impulse come from without. Such are the statues of Memnon which are animated, have a voice, and give a sound only when struck by the rays of the sun. This is not the human voice which starts from within and resounds from the soul; this free principle which animates the human form here remains concealed, enveloped, mute, without true spontaneity, and is animated only under the influence of nature.

A superior form is that of the myth of Osiris, of the Egyptian god *par excellence*; of that god which is begotten, is born, dies and is resuscitated. In this myth, which presents a variety of meanings, at once physical, historical, moral and religious or metaphysical, is manifest the superiority of these conceptions over those of Indian art.

In Egyptian art there is revealed in general a more profound, more spiritual and more moral character. The human form is no longer a simple abstract personification. Religion and art endeavor to become spiritualized; they do not, indeed, attain to this end, but they comprehend and aspire after it. From this imperfection arises the absence of freedom in the human form. The human figure remains still without expression, colossal, serious, petrified. Thus are explained those attitudes of the Egyptian statues, the arms stiff, pressed against the body, without grace, without movement and without life, but absorbed in a profound thought, and full of seriousness.

Whence also the complication of elements and symbols which intermingle and are reflected the one in the other; this indicates at the same time freedom of spirit, but also an absence of clearness and of measure. Whence the obscure enigmatical characters of these symbols, which have always been the despair of savants: enigmas even for the Egyptians themselves. These emblems contain a multitude of profound meanings. They stand there as a testimony of the fruitless efforts of the spirit to comprehend itself; a symbolism full of mysteries, a vast enigma represented by a symbol which sums up all enigmas in one—the *Sphinx*. This enigma Egypt will propose to Greece, and it will be the problem of the religion and the philosophy of this people. The meaning of this enigma, never resolved and which yet ever incessantly resolves itself, is *man*. *Know thyself*—such is the maxim which Greece inscribed upon the front of her temples, the problem which she proposed to her sages as the very end of wisdom.

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## ANTHROPOLOGY.

Translated from the German of Immanuel Kant by A. E. KROEGER.

### *Concerning the Stoppage, Weakening, and Total Loss of our Sensuous Faculty.*

§24. The sensuous faculty can be weakened, stopped, or totally destroyed. Hence the conditions of drunkenness, sleep, fainting, seeming death, (*asphyxia*), and real death.

Drunkenness is the unnatural condition caused by an impossibility to regulate our sensuous representations in accordance with the laws of experience, in-so-far as this impossibility is the effect of an article of diet taken in excess.

Sleep, according to its verbal definition, is a condition of impossibility, on the part of a healthy man, to become conscious of perceptions through his external senses. We leave it to the physiologists to explain, if they can, by a real definition, this un-